

November 2003

1.11

Persuasive

Benchmarks

In persuasive writing, students judge, propose, and persuade. This is evident when students:

5-8:

- A. Clearly define a significant problem, issue, topic, or concern;
- B. Make an assertion or judgment, or propose one or more solutions;
- C. Support proposals, as appropriate, through definitions, descriptions, illustrations, examples from experience, and anecdotes; and
- D. Engage the reader by anticipating shared concerns and stressing their importance, discussing the pros and cons of alternatives, and addressing the reader's potential doubts and criticisms.

9-12: Evidence 5 – 8 applies, plus -

- E. Take authoritative stand on topic;
- F. Support the statement with sound reasoning; and
- G. Use a range of strategies to elaborate and persuade.

8th Grade Benchmarks

“Windows Is Evil ‘Bad’. DOS is GOOD.”	5 / 3
“Columbus’ Road to Perdition”	4 / 2
“Paving the Dirt Roads”	4 / 3
“JISP”	3 / 3
“Just in Case”	2 / 3
“Steriods”	2 / 2
“Chlorine in Pools”	1 / 1

VERMONT NEW STANDARDS RUBRIC FOR PERSUASIVE WRITING: WRITING TO PROPOSE OR PERSUADE

Standard 1.11 In persuasive writing, students judge, propose, and persuade.

Criteria	Score Point 5 Exceeds the Standard	Score Point 4 Accomplished Writing	Score Point 3 Intermediate Writing	Score Point 2 Basic Writing	Score Point 1 Limited Writing
PURPOSE POSITION Topic and Context Focus (Thesis or Controlling Idea)	Score point 5 meets all the criteria of score point 4. In addition, a paper receiving this score presents unusually perceptive arguments/ reasons with richly elaborated supporting details.	Establishes and maintains a clear topic. Asserts and maintains a clear position/focus throughout the piece (purpose). Establishes context for the presentation of ideas (purpose).	States a clear topic (purpose). Establishes a position/ focus (purpose). Establishes a context. May have some digressions.	Topic may be unclear (purpose). Position/focus unclear (purpose). Establishes little or no context. May meander or contain digressions.	Topic is absent or may be difficult to discern (purpose). No position/ focus (purpose). No context. May be rambling, long, and unfocused.
VOICE/TONE (Stance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of gathered information Analysis of a situation followed by a suggested course of action Consideration or rebuttal of opposing arguments Appropriate stance 	Such papers use language selected with careful attention to persuasive appeal. Writers show confidence, conviction, and enthusiasm. May present ideas in unusual or surprising patterns.	Uses precise language effectively and purposefully (voice/tone). Conveys conviction voice/ tone).	Uses appropriate language, but may lack precision (voice/ tone). Usually conveys a sense of conviction (voice/ tone).	Language is predictable and general rather than precise (voice/ tone). May lack conviction (voice/ tone).	Language may be inappropriate or inexact (voice/ tone).
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate patterns; specific to general; general to specific; causal; sequential; other, appropriate to author's point of view Overall Coherence 	Writers argue effectively for their positions or use reasons effectively. Such papers are usually insightful in anticipating and addressing possible reader concerns.	Possesses overall coherence and internal cohesion. Arranges arguments, reasons, and/or evidence effectively and persuasively. Transitions, when used, are effective (organization). Strong introduction and conclusion (organization).	Possesses overall coherence, but cohesion between sentences or paragraphs may be weak. Arranges ideas in simple ways, listing without relating them to each other. May have weak transitions (organization). May lack effective beginning or ending (organization).	May possess simple, straightforward organization. May lack transitions (organization). May lack a clear beginning or ending (organization).	Shows little logical arrangement of ideas. May be too brief to discern a pattern of organization.
ELABORATION STRATEGIES/ DETAIL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depth and density of arguments or reasons Relevance of arguments or reasons Audience awareness 	Embeds prior knowledge, personal experience, and/or reflection into fabric of argument.	Develops position through detailed arguments and reasons. Provides a variety of strategies: examples, anecdotes, and other kinds of information. Shows credibility and authenticity. Anticipates and addresses possible reader concerns, misconceptions, or counter arguments.	States appropriate arguments or reasons. Provides some supporting evidence for arguments or reasons. Assumes that readers will find the ideas credible. May offer scant or superficial evidence of audience awareness	Reasons are thinly developed. Presents some information, but may lack elaboration. May contain irrelevant or inappropriate details or examples. Usually does not reflect an awareness of the reader's needs.	Uses few or no supporting ideas. Rarely any awareness of reader's needs.

This rubric is adapted from materials created by the New Standards Project.

PERSUASIVE

Persuasive: Standard 1.11 In persuasive writing, students judge, propose, persuade. This is evident when students: (5 – 8) **a.** Clearly define a significant problem, issue, topic, or concern; **b.** Make an assertion or judgement, or propose one or more solutions; **c.** Support proposals, as appropriate, through definitions, descriptions, illustrations, examples from experience, and anecdotes; **d.** Engage the reader by anticipating shared concerns and stressing their importance, discussing the pros and cons of alternatives, and addressing the reader’s potential doubts and criticisms; (9 – 12) **e.** Take an authoritative stand on a topic; **f.** Support the statement with sound reasoning; and **g.** Use a range of strategies to elaborate and persuade.

PERSUASIVE – Persuasive writing is writing that aims at convincing people to accept a point of view, to change their minds about something or to act in a certain way. A persuasive essay is a form of writing in which a writer supports an opinion and tries to persuade an audience.

GLOSSARY

Antithesis - A contrast or opposition of thought, the opposite. It usually appears in two phrases, clauses, or sentences (Ex: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” I am going; you are coming.) However, in persuasive writing it is the idea that every argument generates a counter argument. Opposing arguments should be addressed in good persuasive writing.

Coherence – The arrangement of ideas in such a way that the reader can easily follow from one point to another. When all the ideas are logically integrated, arranged, connected, and clearly articulated, a piece of quality writing has coherence.

Context – The set of facts or circumstances that establish the importance of the writer’s is a point of view.

Counter Argument – see antithesis

Elaboration – The development and expansion of ideas and arguments. Both logical (evidence, reasons, facts and statistics) and emotional appeals can be used.

Focus – The concentration on an aspect of a specific topic.

Purpose – The basic purpose of a persuasive piece is to convince someone else to act or think in a certain way.

Stance – The attitude or position the author has adopted.

Tone – The writer’s attitude toward a subject.

Thesis – A statement of purpose or intent. It is the writer’s controlling idea about the topic.

Topic – The subject covered in a piece of writing.

Voice – The style and quality of the writing. Voice portrays the author’s personality or the personality of a chosen persona. A distinctive voice establishes personal expression and enhances the writing.

Windows is Evil “Bad”. DOS is GOOD.

In 1995, Microsoft introduced a new product to the PC community sporting the name “Windows 95.” Prior to and for some time after its introduction, Microsoft maintained a large scale ad campaign, boasting their product’s “Plug and Play” ‘technology,’ and making claims about it being the most “User Friendly,” “Powerful,” and “Compatible” operating system yet created. But I want you to know the other, *dark* side of this operating system, I want you to know the TRUTH about this operating system; its extensive errors and faults, its unreliability and its massive incompatibilities. I also want you to know that there is an alternative operating system, DOS (Disk Operating System), which is much more dependable and consistent.

Windows 95 has been described as “Wonderful,” “Easy to use,” and even “Amazing.” It is true that the Windows environment has many bundled tools and applications which many people find extremely useful in their jobs and pursuits. *PC Magazine’s* 1995 Fall issue described Windows 95 as “user friendly,” and called its operating system “intricate, but very easy and very powerful.” This is to some degree true, at least until one tries to use a program that is not included in the original installation package for Windows. At this point, we see the meaning behind the statement in PC World’s March '95 issue; “Windows...is buggy as hell.” Microsoft likes to brag about how its product is *so* compatible, but too often when you try to load an application not made specifically for your Windows version, some inexplicable error occurs. One of the most common errors is the “General Protection Fault.” This error is 99 times out of a hundred impossible to explain, and impossible to fix. You’re running your favorite game or Web browser, and all of the sudden, an error window pops up with those words and a

bunch of incomprehensible hexadecimal numbers. Now, Windows automatically closes what you were using, *whatever* you are using, and returns you to its main screen. This built-in, *user-friendly* Windows online help program is, to quote PC World again, “completely worthless...”

Another fun error which happens a lot in Windows 95 especially is the Close Program dialog box. This popup screen often follows a general protection fault, but not always. You’re typing away, and suddenly Windows jumps out of the bushes and says, basically, “Your computer has performed an ‘illegal operation’”. Now Windows asks you if you’d like to attempt to continue the program or exit. No matter which option you choose, Windows develops amnesia and just asks you again, again, and again, forever. The only option is to reboot, without any of your files saved, and start all over again whatever you were doing. This error *can* be fixed, or bypassed, at least, by a third party program for only a mere 70 or 80 dollars.

My “favorite” error above all is, however, what I call the MAD phenomenon. MAD stands for Mutually Assured Destruction. This phenomenon occurs when Windows detects another operating system, or you just try to boot from a disk with another operating system. This is a rare incident, but it still happens. In fact, it happened to me once. My computer was originally a prototype 486 model, but over the years, it’s 100 megabyte hard drive was replaced by a 1 gigabyte one, a CD drive was attached, and several megabytes of RAM were added. To make the computer accept all these things, Windows 95 was, unfortunately, required. One day, while clearing up space on my hard drive, I accidentally deleted a directory with a game that I liked that I did not have backup for. No bother, I thought, I’ll just go to the “Recycle bin” in Windows and

“undelete” it. Unfortunately, this did not work, as every time I tried to open the Recycle Bin, I got a *General Protection Fault*. Every time. Still determined to recover my lost game, I tried to boot from a DOS system disk. Everything was working nicely until I tried to undelete the file. At this point, Windows jumped in and said I wasn’t *allowed* to delete the file, as it was on a *network drive*. Ha ha. Whatever. My computer was not, is not, and never will be attached to a network. “Realizing” that it might be incorrect (there’s user-friendliness again), Windows asked me if my hard drive was a network drive, and I said, “no.” At this point the computer, under Windows’ prompting, did three things; first, it scrambled my DOS disk, second, it scrambled itself, and third, it hung the computer. Mutually Assured Destruction. It was only after several days and much reconstructing that I was finally able to run Windows again. Half of the hardware, including my CD drive did not work, and now Windows gives me a General Protection Fault every time I try to run DOS.

There are many more faults, errors, and glitches in the Windows operating system other than those I already mentioned, especially in the area of incompatibility, but I will delve no further into them. Instead, I will offer you a profitable and very reasonable alternative to the cursed Windows environment. The DOS environment intimidates many people due to its “harsh” appearance, as opposed to the Windows’ “window-oriented” environment. On the other hand, the “command prompt” is only the “foundation” for programs and file managing. In fact, you never have to see it at all if you find it too frightening. The user can tell DOS to execute a specific program(s) at startup, possibly a file manager you feel comfortable with, one of the many menu programs. Never will you see anything even vaguely resembling a General Protection Fault, or some other

unexplainable annoyance, as DOS is not hindered by millions and millions of pages of code to try to be compatible with itself, as Windows does. If you prefer a point-and-click operating environment, you can get one off the Internet somewhere and have DOS execute it at startup. Pretty much *never* (seriously) will DOS be unable to load an alternative operating environment, browser, or whatever, unless, of course, it is outside the capabilities of your computer itself to do so. Because DOS is so direct in its processing, it is very flexible, allowing for varying environments to be existing simultaneously, it is a very versatile and effective command interpreter for your computer. You should give it a try.

Windows is Evil “Bad”. DOS is GOOD.

In 1995, Microsoft introduced a new product to the PC community sporting the name “Windows 95.” Prior to and for some time after its introduction, Microsoft maintained a large scale ad campaign, boasting their product’s “Plug and Play” ‘technology,’ and making claims about it being the most “User Friendly,” “Powerful,” and “Compatible” operating system yet created. But I want you to know the other, *dark* side of this operating system, I want you to know the TRUTH about this operating system; its extensive errors and faults, its unreliability and its massive incompatibilities. I also want you to know that there is an alternative operating system, DOS (Disk Operating System), which is much more dependable and consistent.

Writer establishes context for presentation of ideas

Strongly stated position includes a proposal

Windows 95 has been described as “Wonderful,” “Easy to use,” and even “Amazing.” It is true that the Windows environment has many bundled tools and applications which many people find extremely useful in their jobs and pursuits. *PC Magazine’s* 1995 Fall issue described Windows 95 as “user friendly,” and called its operating system “intricate, but very easy and very powerful.” This is to some degree true, at least until one tries to use a program that is not included in the original installation package for Windows. At this point, we see the meaning behind the statement in PC World’s March ’95 issue; “Windows...is buggy as hell.” Microsoft likes to brag about how its product is *so* compatible, but too often when you try to load an application not made specifically for your Windows version, some inexplicable error occurs. One of the most common errors is the “General Protection Fault.” This error is 99 times out of a hundred impossible to explain, and impossible to fix. You’re running your favorite game or Web browser, and all of the sudden, an error window pops up with those words and a bunch of incomprehensible hexadecimal numbers. Now, Windows automatically closes what you were using, *whatever* you are using, and returns you to its main screen. This built-in, *user-*

Counter argument comes from cited sources

Elaborated rebuttal to counter argument uses precise language effectively and purposefully

Supporting anecdote

friendly Windows online help program is, to quote PC World again, “completely worthless...”

Another fun error which happens a lot in Windows 95 especially is the Close Program dialog box. This popup screen often follows a general protection fault, but not always. You’re typing away, and suddenly Windows jumps out of the bushes and says, basically, “Your computer has performed an ‘illegal operation’”. Now Windows asks you if you’d like to attempt to continue the program or exit. No matter which option you choose, Windows develops amnesia and just asks you again, again, and again, forever. The only option is to reboot, without any of your files saved, and start all over again whatever you were doing. This error *can* be fixed, or bypassed, at least, by a third party program for only a mere 70 or 80 dollars.

Transition and second elaborated argument

Concrete example shows credibility and authenticity of writer

My “favorite” error above all is, however, what I call the MAD phenomenon. MAD stands for Mutually Assured Destruction. This phenomenon occurs when Windows detects another operating system, or you just try to boot from a disk with another operating system. This is a rare incident, but it still happens. In fact, it happened to me once. My computer was originally a prototype 486 model, but over the years, it’s 100 megabyte hard drive was replaced by a 1 gigabyte one, a CD drive was attached, and several megabytes of RAM were added. To make the computer accept all these things, Windows 95 was, unfortunately, required. One day, while clearing up space on my hard drive, I accidentally deleted a directory with a game that I liked that I did not have backup for. No bother, I thought, I’ll just go to the “Recycle bin” in Windows and “undelete” it. Unfortunately, this did not work, as every time I tried to open the Recycle Bin, I got a *General Protection Fault*. Every time. Still determined to recover my lost game, I tried to boot from a DOS system disk. Everything was working nicely until I tried to undelete the file. At this point, Windows jumped in and said I wasn’t *allowed* to delete the file, as it was on a *network drive*. Ha ha. Whatever. My computer was not, is not, and never will be attached to a network. “Realizing” that it might be incorrect (there’s user-friendliness

Transition and third elaborated argument

Personal experience lends depth and density to argument

again), Windows asked me if my hard drive was a network drive, and I said, “no.” At this point the computer, under Windows’ prompting, did three things; first, it scrambled my DOS disk, second, it scrambled itself, and third, it hung the computer. Mutually Assured Destruction. It was only after several days and much reconstructing that I was finally able to run Windows again. Half of the hardware, including my CD drive did not work, and now Windows gives me a General Protection Fault every time I try to run DOS.

Depth of elaboration and language that shows audience awareness

There are many more faults, errors, and glitches in the Windows operating system other than those I already mentioned, especially in the area of incompatibility, but I will delve no further into them. Instead, I will offer you a profitable and very reasonable alternative to the cursed Windows environment. The DOS environment intimidates many people due to its “harsh” appearance, as opposed to the Windows’ “window-oriented” environment. On the other hand, the “command prompt” is only the “foundation” for programs and file managing. In fact, you never have to see it at all if you find it too frightening. The user can tell DOS to execute a specific program(s) at startup, possibly a file manager you feel comfortable with, one of the many menu programs. Never will you see anything even vaguely resembling a General Protection Fault, or some other unexplainable annoyance, as DOS is not hindered by millions and millions of pages of code to try to be compatible with itself, as Windows does. If you prefer a point-and-click operating environment, you can get one off the Internet somewhere and have DOS execute it at startup. Pretty much *never* (seriously) will DOS be unable to load an alternative operating environment, browser, or whatever, unless, of course, it is outside the capabilities of your computer itself to do so. Because DOS is so direct in its processing, it is very flexible, allowing for varying environments to be existing simultaneously, it is a very versatile and effective command interpreter for your computer. You should give it a try. ← *Clincher sentence*

Last paragraph is conclusion that offers the promised proposal, with details that address readers’ concerns

Annotations next page

Score Point 5

This piece of persuasive writing fulfills all the criteria for Score Point 4: a strongly stated position is supported with detailed arguments arranged persuasively and effectively. In addition, the writer shows confidence, conviction, and enthusiasm for the subject matter. He/she embeds prior knowledge and personal experience into the argument and addresses readers' concerns throughout.

Conventions – Score Point 3

The writing demonstrates control of grade-level conventions.

Columbus's Road to Perdition

“In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” Taken from a poem written about Columbus’s voyage from Spain to America, it is a true enough statement. As for the rest of the poem, chances are, that most of what is said of Columbus is false, or “glossed over”, for this is the way of victors and Columbus was certainly named a victor. Victors write history and if history says it is so for long enough, the future will believe them. This is the case with Columbus’s story. So many gruesome, vicious things went on during Columbus and his follower’s time that our ancestors had to censor most of the details, just erase them in order to come up with a story fit to tell in the classroom. So now most of us know a story 95% hoax, absolute fiction. When in truth, Columbus doesn’t deserve a holiday any more than Hitler

Through the years a story fit to tell Americans has evolved, a story told of a man named Columbus, who did great exploring and made great discoveries. And using his excellent navigational skills came upon America, where native Indians tried to viciously and savagely drive him back and take his provisions. But Columbus triumphed and conquered the Indians and in doing so, paved the road to opportunity for our future settlers.

This story is both untrue and offending, for in true retrospect the native people that Columbus came upon were neither savage nor vicious, but it was Columbus who most deserves the title. And he did not so valiantly fight the natives (Tainos). He slaughtered, raped, tortured, enslaved and mutilated them with many times more force than was necessary, all for the love and obsession of gold (something that was very rare in the natives lands).

As for his excellent navigational skills, Columbus didn't even land in America. He landed amongst a group of islands off the coast of North America. And certainly not because he intended to, Columbus had originally meant to find a shorter means of travel by sea from Spain to the Indies. But he was blown off course during a storm. And when he and his three ships landed in the midst of a group of islands off the coast of North America he thought himself to be off the coast of India. He had not factored in the fact that 2 whole continents lay in his way. The information to prove these facts true can be found in books and movies such as 500 Nations and "Rethinking Columbus".

I have nothing better to say of Columbus's "discoveries" for as you now know, when he ran into the group of islands there were already natives there, and I'm sure that they were well aware and proud of their civilized cities and their way of living. The Taino's for example had lived quietly and peacefully for hundreds of years before Columbus came and massacred their villages and stole their land and people. In fact all the islands and later continents that Columbus "discovered" already had inhabitants. Yet none of these inhabitants were treated with courtesy.

During Columbus and his followers reign of terror, natives' hands were cut off if they did not bring the Spaniards enough gold. Entire villages were burned to the ground and millions died. Whether on their way back to Spain to be sold as slaves or at the hands of the Spaniards themselves. Several would rather kill themselves than live to work or die at the hands of their brutal captors.

By the time Columbus had died only a handful of the natives remained, and the road to perdition had been paved, not the road to opportunity.

"Within 100 years of contact with European and American settlers the Native

American population was reduced by 90% Howard Zenn.

So, can you now believe that Columbus deserves his holiday? Do you still think he deserves his day of worship? My grandfather was of Inca heritage, and most of that civilization was wiped out by Spanish conquistadors following in Columbus's footsteps. If not for Columbus I may have gotten to know more of my history.

I should only hope that ones conscience and compassion would make you realize that no man shape or form that causes this much pain and suffering to millions of innocent people deserves to have his name connected with anything more than genocide. Why not celebrate the natives? If anyone should be remembered because of those years it is the innocent lives that were left in ruin.

“Hook”

Columbus’s Road to Perdition

“In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” Taken from a poem written about Columbus’s voyage from Spain to America, it is a true enough statement. As for the rest of the poem, chances are, that most of what is said of Columbus is false, or “glossed over”, for this is the way of victors and Columbus was certainly named a victor. Victors write history and if history says it is so for long enough, the future will believe them. This is the case with Columbus’s story. So many gruesome, vicious things went on during Columbus and his follower’s time that our ancestors had to censor most of the details, just erase them in order to come up with a story fit to tell in the classroom. So now most of us know a story 95% hoax, absolute fiction. When in truth, Columbus doesn’t deserve a holiday any more than Hitler

Writer establishes a context for the presentation of ideas

Strongly stated position

Through the years a story fit to tell Americans has evolved, a story told of a man named Columbus, who did great exploring and made great discoveries. And using his excellent navigational skills came upon America, where native Indians tried to viciously and savagely drive him back and take his provisions. But Columbus triumphed and conquered the Indians and in doing so, paved the road to opportunity for our future settlers.

Counter argument: entire essay is a rebuttal to the story told about Columbus

Asserts position

This story is both untrue and offending, for in true retrospect the native people that Columbus came upon were neither savage nor vicious, but it was Columbus who most deserves the title. And he did not so valiantly fight the natives (Tainos). He slaughtered, raped, tortured, enslaved and mutilated them with many times more force than was necessary, all for the love and obsession of gold (something that was very rare in the natives lands).

Writer refutes one part of the story with strong verbs but lack of detailed elaboration to support assertions

transition

As for his excellent navigational skills, Columbus didn’t even land in America. He landed amongst a group of islands off the coast of North America. And certainly not because he intended to, Columbus had originally meant to find a shorter means of travel by sea from Spain to the Indies. But he was blown off course during

Writer refutes a second part of the story

a storm. And when he and his three ships landed in the midst of a group of islands off the coast of North America he thought himself to be off the coast of India. He had not factored in the fact that 2 whole continents lay in his way. The information to prove these facts true can be found in books and movies such as 500 Nations and “Rethinking Columbus”. ← *Awkwardly worded citation of evidence*

I have nothing better to say of Columbus’s “discoveries” for as you now know, when he ran into the group of islands there were already natives there, and I’m sure that they were well aware and proud of their civilized cities and their way of living. The Taino’s for example had lived quietly and peacefully for hundreds of years before Columbus came and massacred their villages and stole their land and people. In fact all the islands and later continents that Columbus “discovered” already had inhabitants. Yet none of these inhabitants were treated with courtesy.

General support for position

During Columbus and his followers reign of terror, natives’ hands were cut off if they did not bring the Spaniards enough gold. Entire villages were burned to the ground and millions died. Whether on their way back to Spain to be sold as slaves or at the hands of the Spaniards themselves. Several would rather kill themselves than live to work or die at the hands of their brutal captors.

Support for position needs more elaboration to be credible; however, language is strong

By the time Columbus had died only a handful of the natives remained, and the road to perdition had been paved, not the road to opportunity.

“Within 100 years of contact with European and American settlers the Native American population was reduced by 90% Howard Zenn.

So, can you now believe that Columbus deserves his holiday? Do you still think he deserves his day of worship? My grandfather was of Inca heritage, and most of that civilization was wiped out by Spanish conquistadors following in Columbus’s footsteps. If not for Columbus I may have gotten to know more of my history.

Effective personal connection

I should only hope that ones conscience and compassion would make you realize that no man shape or form that causes this much pain and suffering to millions of innocent people deserves to have his name connected with anything more

than genocide. Why not celebrate the natives? If anyone should be remembered
because of those years it is the innocent lives that were left in ruin.

***Strongly worded
conclusion***

Score Point 4

This piece of persuasive writing, although a Score Point 4, has some criteria from both Score Points 5 and 3. The “5” quality is the conviction and enthusiasm shown by the writer in his/her persuasive appeal. The “3” quality is the lack of elaboration of the evidence for the argument. However, the writer has a strong position, which addresses the counter argument throughout; a strong introduction and conclusion, as well as transitions; and detailed arguments to support the position.

Conventions – Score Point 2

The writing demonstrates inconsistent control of grade-level conventions, especially in the areas of sentence structure and punctuation.

Paving the dirt roads

The car slips on the muddy terrain, trying desperately to regain traction. The car jumps after hitting the holes formed in the dirt. To the left are ruts created by other vehicles that went through the same struggle. To my right snow is slowly melting, seeping into the dirt. The car swerves trying to avoid the ruts. Yet inevitably, the wheels get stuck in the soft dirt as the driver waits for some help to come along. To think that this whole trauma could have been avoided if the roads in Maybury were paved.

One of the biggest issues for Maybury residents, is the fact that more than half of the roads are not paved. Having dirt roads contributes to the country atmosphere that Maybury provides. On the other hand, it also makes driving difficult during the winter and spring. If the roads were paved it would help avoid cars to swerve off the road, get stuck in ditches, and damage to cars, then it shouldn't even be an issue. We will still have the beautiful surroundings that Vermont is known for, but it will also be easier on cars in every season.

Another concern about paving the roads is the possibility of people being encouraged to drive at higher speeds. Yet, many people already travel well above the speed limit. Many locals are used to the roads and drive 50-70 miles per hour.

Some might argue that the number of cars driving down the roads of Maybury will also increase with pavement. People who live here are used to few cars passing their houses every day. If the roads were paved there might be more cars driving down them because it would be easier on the cars. Yet, the number wouldn't enough to disturb the residents on each road. Right now, there are about 14 cars that pass by my house every

day. If the roads were to be paved and the number double, there would still only be 28 cars per day. This is a low number of cars.

Paved roads will also save the town time because the repairs will be less. It takes a lot of time to fix all the roads in Maybury after each mud season. Many times people are late for jobs, school, or important meetings because they were not able to leave their homes due to the condition of the roads. Sometimes the roads become so bad that they are closed off. This creates problems for people who live on them. When the roads become impossible, it takes even more time to reconstruct them in order to have them be safe enough to drive on. To keep dirt roads decent, it usually takes a great amount of grading whereas with pavement there are few annual repairs needed each year.

Mud not only creates more work for our town, but it also creates problems for cars. During mud season deep ruts are formed, making driving harder on the cars. There are often times where cars are seen bottomed out on the side of the road. Anyone who lives in Maybury has endured the frustration of being stranded on the side of the road hoping that help will come along shortly. These problems also cost the drivers a lot of money because of the damage to tires, brakes, and shocks. Many people find themselves having to buy mufflers each year.

Each year people in Maybury go through the traumatic experience of bottoming out on an abandoned dirt road. There is always the sinking feeling of knowing that it could be your car stuck and awaiting help. The cost of repairing the damage on the car due to the mud season adds up. Spring is often a season most residents wish they didn't have to go through. Yet, instead of experiencing this problem year after year, it could be ended by simply paving the roads.

Paving the dirt roads

The car slips on the muddy terrain, trying desperately to regain traction. The car jumps after hitting the holes formed in the dirt. To the left are ruts created by other vehicles that went through the same struggle. To my right snow is slowly melting, seeping into the dirt. The car swerves trying to avoid the ruts. Yet inevitably, the wheels get stuck in the soft dirt as the driver waits for some help to come along. To think that this whole trauma could have been avoided if the roads in Maybury were paved. ← **Clear position**

Writer uses scenario to set context effectively

One of the biggest issues for Maybury residents, is the fact that more than half of the roads are not paved. Having dirt roads contributes to the country atmosphere that Maybury provides. On the other hand, it also makes driving difficult during the winter and spring. If the roads were paved it would help avoid cars to swerve off the road, get stuck in ditches, and damage to cars, then it shouldn't even be an issue. We will still have the beautiful surroundings that Vermont is known for, but it will also be easier on cars in every season.

Transition, counter argument and rebuttal

Another concern about paving the roads is the possibility of people being encouraged to drive at higher speeds. Yet, many people already travel well above the speed limit. Many locals are used to the roads and drive 50-70 miles per hour.

Transition, counter argument and rebuttal

Some might argue that the number of cars driving down the roads of Maybury will also increase with pavement. People who live here are used to few cars passing their houses every day. If the roads were paved there might be more cars driving down them because it would be easier on the cars. Yet, the number wouldn't enough to disturb the residents on each road. Right now, there are about 14 cars that pass by my house every day. If the roads were to be paved and the number double, there would still only be 28 cars per day. This is a low number of cars.

Transition, counter argument and rebuttal

Paved roads will also save the town time because the repairs will be less. It takes a lot of time to fix all the roads in Maybury after each mud season. Many times people are late for jobs, school, or important meetings because they were not able to

Direct support for position

leave their homes due to the condition of the roads. Sometimes the roads become so bad that they are closed off. This creates problems for people who live on them. When the roads become impossible, it takes even more time to reconstruct them in order to have them be safe enough to drive on. To keep dirt roads decent, it usually takes a great amount of grading whereas with pavement there are few annual repairs needed each year.

Writer's details and elaboration are credible

Mud not only creates more work for our town, but it also creates problems for cars. During mud season deep ruts are formed, making driving harder on the cars. There are often times where cars are seen bottomed out on the side of the road. Anyone who lives in Maybury has endured the frustration of being stranded on the side of the road hoping that help will come along shortly. These problems also cost the drivers a lot of money because of the damage to tires, brakes, and shocks. Many people find themselves having to buy mufflers each year.

Detailed reasons show authenticity; precise language used persuasively and effectively

Each year people in Maybury go through the traumatic experience of bottoming out on an abandoned dirt road. There is always the sinking feeling of knowing that it could be your car stuck and awaiting help. The cost of repairing the damage on the car due to the mud season to adds up. Spring is often a season most residents wish they didn't have to go through. Yet, instead of experiencing this problem year after year, it could be ended by simply paving the roads.

← *Strong conclusion*

Score Point 4

The writer establishes a clear topic and position throughout the piece, initially using a counter argument/rebuttal organization. Transitions are used effectively, to connect both paragraphs and ideas within them. The writer uses anecdotal evidence and relevant reasons to support the position and seems to have an awareness of audience.

Conventions – Score Point 3

The writing demonstrates control of grade-level conventions.

JISP

I, and many other people, have heard a lot of rumors around the school that Stratton is going to stop the Junior Instructional Ski Program (JISP) program. Everyone that I have talked to believes that it would be a very big mistake if Stratton really did go through with this. So in my essay, I will tell the people who appreciate the JISP program why Stratton should keep it.

I don't think that it would be very smart for Stratton to stop the JISP program for several reasons. For one, they would be losing a lot of business. Even though the students receive free days, on those free days, the students' parents will often join them, which means that they must pay for the tickets. Another reason is that if they do shut the JISP program down, then the schools will most likely go to Mount Snow, which will give Mount Snow a lot more business. This probably wouldn't happen right away, but Stratton would slowly be losing good business from the parents.

Another reason I think that Stratton should keep the JISP program is that a lot of people in the valley would not be able to afford to ski or board as often as they do with the JISP program if they were to have to pay. I asked Ms. Smith, the principal, about her opinion on this and she said,

“Although skiing and snow-boarding are two very enjoyable sports, they are also very expensive and a lot of Vermonters would be losing a very good program.”

One problem with this argument is the opposing argument. If Stratton has a legitimate argument for stopping the JISP program; for example, if they are losing money and/or time, we need to respect that and really be prepared for it. We could argue that Mount Snow would be gaining money, which would be extremely bad for Stratton.

In conclusion, I think Stratton should continue with their JISP program. If they didn't, they would ultimately be losing a large profit, and so I, and many other people who are connected with the JISP program, call on the community to stop Stratton from closing it down.

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Needed background information on the program is thin

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Reasons are thinly developed

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Writing lacks a convincing tone

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Counter argument and rebuttal not clear or effective

In conclusion, I think Stratton should continue with their JISP program. If they didn't, they would ultimately be losing a large profit, and so I, and many other

people who are connected with the JISP program, call on the community to stop Stratton from closing it down.

Score Point 3

Although this piece has a clear position/focus, the writer assumes that the readers will find the ideas understandable/credible and does not support with them enough elaborated evidence. The voice lacks conviction, and the arguments are listed in simple ways, using basic transitions.

Conventions – Score Point 3

The writing demonstrates control of grade-level conventions.

Just in Case...

My parents and I have been talking a lot about cell phones lately. I think I should get one, they think not. Have you ever been stuck somewhere and there was no way to call for something. My parents are strict when it comes to being home on time, I think it only took me one mess up to learn my lesson.

I left my house key in my locker accidentally. I went to my friend Erica's house. She had to bring her little sister to Burlington so we took a bus. After her little sister got off where she had to, it was our turn to get on the bus back to town. 6:30 rolled around and a bus finally came. I walked in the door and I could feel the tension right off.

If I had a cell phone I could have called home and said that I'd be home late.

What if I was in trouble and I needed help? I wouldn't be able to get the help that I needed!

My parents say I'm not responsible and they say I'll look like a "bad child". Well, I'm 14 now, not a child and I think I'm plenty responsible. I've brought my grades up, stopped getting in trouble and I haven't been late for the longest time.

Everyone should have a cell phone, just in case.

Just in Case...

Little context

My parents and I have been talking a lot about cell phones lately. I think I should get one, they think not. Have you ever been stuck somewhere and there was no way to call for something. My parents are strict when it comes to being home on time, I think it only took me one mess up to learn my lesson.

Position stated

I left my house key in my locker accidentally. I went to my friend Erica's house. She had to bring her little sister to Burlington so we took a bus. After her little sister got off where she had to, it was our turn to get on the bus back to town. 6:30 rolled around and a bus finally came. I walked in the door and I could feel the tension right off.

Anecdote only tangentially related to topic

If I had a cell phone I could have called home and said that I'd be home late.

What if I was in trouble and I needed help? I wouldn't be able to get the help that I needed!

No elaboration of this reason

My parents say I'm not responsible and they say I'll look like a "bad child". Well, I'm 14 now, not a child and I think I'm plenty responsible. I've brought my grades up, stopped getting in trouble and I haven't been late for the longest time.

Writer rebuts half of counter argument but does not relate it to topic

Everyone should have a cell phone, just in case.

Score Point 2

This attempt at persuasive writing is too thinly developed to score above a Score Point 2. Even though it has a position, the writer presents little evidence to support the topic.

Conventions – Score Point 3

The writing demonstrates control of grade-level conventions.

Steroids

Should you take them, or should you not? There are a lot of reasons for taking steroids. On the other hand there are also a lot of bad things that could happen to you if you take steroids. I feel you shouldn't take steroids unless they are prescribed by a doctor. It could do serious harm to your health.

The only reason you should take steroids is if they are prescribed by a doctor. You shouldn't abuse the prescription. You should take the right amount. If they aren't prescribed by a doctor then they're illegal. You can get into trouble if you are caught with an illegal drug. So you probably don't want to do something that could put you in jail.

If you play sports, steroids can help you. Some reasons why people would take them are so they can't feel muscle pain. You might feel more muscular if you take steroids. You will be able to do things you couldn't do before. You will also have more energy.

Some bad side effects from taking steroid might happen to you. For example if you can't feel pain, you could be hurting your muscles and you could have torn cartilage and not know it. The most important thing is they're bad for your health if they're abused. If you overdose, you can die. You can get really sick if you taken them with Coke or something with a lot of caffeine.

For all the reasons above I don't think anyone should take steroids. Unless they are prescribed by a doctor. You shouldn't abuse the prescription. Always remember you can go to jail if you're caught with illegal drugs. I hope you have learned that steroids are bad for you if you overdose on them.

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Little context; focus stated but not supported in the writing

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Writer meanders on the topic

If you play sports, steroids can help you. Some reasons why people would take them are so they can't feel muscle pain. You might feel more muscular if you take steroids. You will be able to do things you couldn't do before. You will also have more energy.

Arguments for steroids contradict the position

Some bad side effects from taking steroid might happen to you. For example if you can't feel pain, you could be hurting your muscles and you could have torn cartilage and not know it. The most important thing is they're bad for your health if they're abused. If you overdose, you can die. You can get really sick if you taken them with Coke or something with a lot of caffeine.

Writer presents some, unelaborated information

For all the reasons above I don't think anyone should take steroids. Unless they are prescribed by a doctor. You shouldn't abuse the prescription. Always remember you can go to jail if you're caught with illegal drugs. I hope you have learned that steroids are bad for you if you overdose on them.

Ineffective conclusion

Score Point 2

Although the topic of this piece is clear, the position waffles halfway through the piece and is, therefore, ineffective as persuasive writing.

Conventions – Score Point 2

The writing demonstrates inconsistent control of grade-level conventions, including the misspelling of the topic ("steriods").

Chlorine & Pools

People should swim because it is one of the best exercises there is says “People Weekly.” Swimming is also one of the best because it makes your lungs bigger and you do get stronger when you swim. It helps you become more involved in an activity.

If you would like to swim see your local health and fitness center for more information about swimming and all its benefits. If you do not like the chlorine in your hair or the stinging eyes. You should probably go to a swimming should and you should get goggles for eyes to protect your eyes. Then you can get “Swimmer 2000” which will help your by taking out the chlorine and conditioning your hair so it will be healthy as if the chlorine never touched it.

Some people say you should not swim because it can cause great health risks. People think that you should not swim because people with Asthma can have Asthma attacks and drown. Also people with Allergies that are allergic to chlorine can get allergic reaction and die. Even though I think that those are good reasons not to swim but i don’t think that they should band swimming. I think that some people with Asthma or Allergies should try swimming and if it is really not working don’t or swim very little.

So I think that people swim because it is great for you and helps you get stronger.

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Topic is unclear: is it chlorine or swimming?

No position

If you would like to swim see your local health and fitness center for more information about swimming and all its benefits. If you do not like the chlorine in your hair or the stinging eyes. You should probably go to a swimming should and you should get goggles for eyes to protect your eyes. Then you can get “Swimmer 2000” which will help your by taking out the chlorine and conditioning your hair so it will be healthy as if the chlorine never touched it.

Little logical arrangement of ideas

Some people say you should not swim because it can cause great health risks. People think that you should not swim because people with Asthma can have Asthma attacks and drown. Also people with Allergies that are allergic to chlorine can get allergic reaction and die. Even though I think that those are good reasons not to swim but i don’t think that they should band swimming. I think that some people with Asthma or Allergies should try swimming and if it is really not working don’t or swim very little.

Writing is rambling and unfocused

So I think that people swim because it is great for you and helps you get stronger.

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Score Point 1

Even the topic of this paper is not clear; the writer rambles about both swimming and chlorine. There is no awareness of reader’s needs.

Conventions – Score Point 1

The writing demonstrates minimal control of grade-level conventions. Multiple errors in nearly every line interfere with meaning.